

**INCOMING TELEGRAM**

*Department of State*

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## Action

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IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBASSY OFFICER TODAY, GENERAL SIR KENETH STRONG, CHAIRMAN JOINT INTELLIGENCE BOARD, DISCUSSED UK ATTITUDES TOWARD BERLIN PROBLEM AND EAST-WEST NEGOTIATIONS. STRONG SAID WESTERN PLANNING APPEARED TO REST ON ASSUMPTION THAT SINCE KHRUSHCHEV DOES NOT WANT WAR HE WOULD BACK DOWN ON BERLIN DEMANDS WHEN FACED WITH FIRM WESTERN POSITION. WHILE THIS MIGHT BE TRUE THERE WAS ABSENCE CONVINCING INDICATIONS KHRUSHCHEV WOULD DO SO AND SITUATION THEREFORE EXTREMELY DANGEROUS. IMPORTANT NOT TO CORNER KHRUSHCHEV BUT TO LEAVE HIM LINE OF RETREAT. STRONG REMARKED IN THIS CONNECTION THAT WHILE SOVIET PEOPLE DID NOT WANT NUCLEAR WAR ANY MORE THAN BRITISH PEOPLE DID, FORMER WERE LESS AFRAID OF IT THAN ARE BRITISH. STRONG RECALLED THAT IN 1939 BRITISH PEOPLE HAD CONCLUDED WAR INEVITABLE AND MUST BE FACED WHILE FRENCH, CONSCIOUS OF OWN WEAKNESS AND VULNERABILITY, HAD BEEN RELUCTANT TO RESORT TO WAR. STRONG THOUGHT THAT POSSIBLY US ATTITUDE TODAY MIGHT BE SIMILAR TO THAT OF BRITISH IN 1939, NAMELY THAT THREAT HAD TO BE MET EVEN IF IT MEANS WAR, WHILE BRITISH NOW PREOCCUPIED AS WERE FRENCH IN 1939. WITH VULNERABILITY OF THEIR POSITION.

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